

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 00186 070915Z

ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6838

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, IV

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 294314

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS CALLED ON SODESUCRE HEAD KIGBAFORO TO INFORM HIM OF THE US SIGNATURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT AND TO ASK ABOUT IVORIAN INTENTIONS AND TIMING FOR SIGNING OF THE NEW ISA. KIGBAFORO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE NEWS THAT THE US HAD SIGNED, AND INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE AGREEMENT WAS A GOOD ONE. HE WENT ON TO POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE IVORIANS HAVE SEVERAL PROBLEMS WITH THE AGREEMENT.

2. THE FIRST, AND MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM, IS THAT IVORY COAST IS LISTED AS AN IMPORTER IN THE CURRENT ACCORD. WHILE THIS IS PRESENTLY ACCURATE, IVORY COAST HAS UNDERTAKEN AN AMBITIOUS SUGAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND WILL BECOME AN EXPORTER IN EITHER 1979 OR 1980 (SEE ABIDJAN 77 A-87). THEREFORE, THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD BE LISTED AS EXPORTERS (IN THE SMALL EXPORTER GROUP). KIGBAFORO STATED THAT THE GOIC WAS NOT INVITED TO THE OCTOBER MEETING AT WHICH THE ACCORD WAS APPROVED, AND THEREFORE DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CLARIFY THEIR POSITION AT THAT TIME. FURTHER, KIGBAFORO INDICATED THAT GENEVA AUTHORITIES SUGGESTED THAT THE IVORY COAST SIGN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 00186 070915Z

ACCORD AS IT IS AND PETITION TO CHANGE ITS STATUS FROM IMPORTER TO EXPORTER AT THE FIRST SESSION. WHILE THIS IS A POSSIBILITY, IVORY COAST WOULD LIKE SOME ASSURANCE THAT SUCH A REQUEST WOULD NOT BE BLOCKED BY THOSE WHO SAW ANOTHER PRODUCER AS JUST MORE COMPETITION.

3. THE SECOND PROBLEM IS A TECHNICAL ONE: THE NEW ISA IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE LOME CONVENTION. AS EXPLAINED BY KIGBAFORO, THE LOME

CONVENTION PROVIDES A PREFERENTIAL MARKET FOR ASSOCIATED STATES' SUGAR IN THE COMMON MARKET, AND SOMETHING WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT TO ELIMINATE THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE TWO AGREEMENTS. KIGBAFORY BELIEVES THIS CAN BE DONE, AND THAT IT IS PROBABLY BEING CONSIDERED BY OTHER AFFECTED STATES AT PRESENT.

4. EMBASSY OFFICERS STATED THAT THEY HOPED THAT THE GOIC WOULD BE ABLE TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT IN SPITE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES AS THE AGREEMENT OFFERS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO CURRENT DIFFICULT SITUATION. KIBAFORY REPLIED THAT IF THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE WORKED OUT SATISFACTORILY HE WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF SIGNING THE ISA, WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, OFFERS THE IVORY COAST MANY MORE ADVANTAGES THAN DISADVANTAGES. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FINAL DECISION WOULD NOT BE MADE BY HIM, BUT RATHER AS A RECOMMENDATION OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP IN A FEW WEEKS TO SEE IF ANY PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO AN INQUIRY ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SUGAR CAMPAIGN, KIGBAFORY SAID THIS LOOKED LIKE A VERY GOOD YEAR FOR FERKE I, AND ESTIMATED PRODUCTION AT, AT LEAST, 38,000 TONS. HE REPORTED THAT THE HARVEST LOOKS GOOD AND THAT THE REFINERY HAS BEEN RUNNING SMOOTHLY SINCE THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN EARLY NOVEMBER. STEARNS

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